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New York

President:	Mr. Van Oosterom	(Netherlands)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Ms. Macdonal Álvarez
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Akhinzhanov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Ms. Söder
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Angelino Alfano, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Recalling the Security Council's latest note 507 on its working methods (S/2017/507), I wish to encourage all participants, members and non-members of the Council alike, to deliver their statements in five minutes or less. Note 507 also encourages briefers to be succinct and to focus on key issues. Briefers are encouraged to limit initial remarks to 15 minutes or less.

I now give the floor to Mr. Alfano.

Mr. Alfano: I am honoured to address the Security Council concerning the priorities of the Italian chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I especially want to thank the Dutch presidency for this opportunity. This briefing is yet another example of the great spirit of cooperation between Italy and the Netherlands during our split term in the Security Council. Today, I am here because I strongly believe that the OSCE is crucial for our regional security, among many other reasons.

First, the OSCE is among the most inclusive regional and multilateral platforms in the world. Its geographical diversity stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Secondly, all OSCE States have equal participatory rights. One voice is as important as another. Thirdly, the absence of a rigid legal structure enables the OSCE to respond quickly and flexibly to breaking political events. Fourthly, consensus is a strength in the OSCE. The search for a common denominator has reinforced the sense of an OSCE community and facilitates the implementation of our actions.

Given all the security risks that we face in Europe, a forum like the OSCE dedicated to security and cooperation is of great value to us, because, even when dialogue is not conclusive and does result in a solution, it nevertheless continues to build trust among parties. Trust is fundamental to defusing or resolving crises; over time, trust brings results. In the OSCE, trust is an important element, because discussions are inspired by the principles of equality and neutrality. We are constantly reminded that security is a global public good. No nation has ever been secure in isolation for as long as we can trace back in history. We all share responsibility for one another's security. For this reason, I firmly believe in the principle of comprehensive security that guides the OSCE; its ability to work in partnership with other security structures, such as NATO, the United Nations and the European Union; and its members' determination in working towards a confidence- and security-building agenda.

The motto of our OSCE chairmanship is "dialogue, ownership, responsibility". We strongly believe that these are the key ingredients for further strengthening multilateralism in an organization that reaches out to more than 1 billion people. Multilateralism is a defining factor of Italy's foreign policy. Our support for the OSCE is inspired by effective multilateralism, and the OSCE has proved this effectiveness in many ways. A good example of this is the structured dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area, an informal format in which we can have a frank, inclusive and substantive dialogue on complex security issues.

Our motto — "dialogue, ownership, responsibility" — has a specific meaning. We want to follow an approach that looks equally at the Euro-Mediterranean, the Euro-Atlantic and the Euro-Asian regions and their connections; that is open, transparent and inclusive; and that is firm on principles, but flexible and creative on ways to defend those principles more effectively.

These are extremely complex times. The crisis in and around Ukraine is testing the core values that we share. We have faced a crisis of mutual trust and confidence, and there is only one way to rebuild trust: more dialogue, more political will, more concrete actions on the ground.

That is why my first mission as Chairman-in-Office was to Kyiv, Moscow and Donbas. I wanted to send a

strong and clear message: that we expect new steps to be taken for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. The positive results include, first, the success of the Special Monitoring Mission of the OSCE, which is a crucial instrument for averting a dangerous escalation of the crisis despite the difficult conditions. Allow me to underscore once again the fact that we place the highest priority on the safety of the monitors, who must be able to carry out their work with the least possible risk.

Secondly, there is the acknowledgement by both Ukraine and Russia of the need for a United Nations support mission. We obviously are following the contacts under way to this end. Coordination with the OSCE is essential given its extensive experience on the ground. It is also important for the United Nations and the OSCE to complement each other in their different missions.

Beyond the Ukrainian crisis, we are also focusing our full attention on the so-called protracted conflicts. With regard to Georgia, we support the Geneva international discussions and are ready to promote dialogue through informal initiatives as well.

Concerning Nagorno Karabakh, we continue to support the work of the Minsk Group co-Chairs for a definitive and shared solution to the conflict. In Transnistria, we would like to build on the positive momentum. My Special Representative for the Settlement Process is in contact with all the relevant actors.

In the past, our security divide was mainly between East and West. Today, security concerns between East and West are still significant, and the OSCE's role is very relevant. However, we also need to look towards the South and the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean is a small sea, almost the size of a large lake when seen on a globe, but much of our global security is at stake there. It is therefore crucial to intensify dialogue and cooperation with the OSCE partner countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Last year, in the framework of the OSCE, we organized the Palermo Mediterranean Conference. As the Council is aware, the spirit of Helsinki, more than 40 years ago, inspired the rapprochement between East and West during the Cold War period. Today the spirit of Palermo nourishes and strengthens the dialogue for peace and security in the Mediterranean. The spirit of Palermo means the capacity to build a genuine partnership among the 57 OSCE countries and the Mediterranean partners, rediscovering the core mission of the organization as a plural and inclusive multilateral platform. This is the same approach that inspired our mandate in the Council last year.

We are dedicating particular attention to transnational threats such as terrorism; radicalization; the illicit trafficking of arms, drugs, cultural goods and hazardous waste; the links between terrorism and organized crime, international money-laundering and the sources of funding of terrorist groups. Fighting corruption is also central to our agenda, because corruption deeply affects the rule of law and undermines the relationship, built on trust, between Governments and their citizens.

Cybersecurity is another strategic priority. We are promoting initiatives to increase the awareness of decision-makers and the private sector as to how the Internet can affect peace and security. Last September, here at the United Nations, Italy, France and the United Kingdom launched a new initiative putting together States and Internet service providers to respond to the misuse of the Internet. We need to do much more to put terrorism offline.

During our OSCE chairmanship, we also intend to keep a strong emphasis on growth, innovation, human capital, good governance and the transition to green energy, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an agenda that was defined by the United Nations globally and that is being implemented regionally, also through the work of the OSCE. In fact, the OSCE has always fostered the view of comprehensive security as encompassing both sustainable development and human rights.

I also want to underscore the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. Not just because today is International Women's Day, but also because these issues have always been key priorities for Italy. As a member of the Council, we worked to mainstream gender-related issues throughout the United Nations system, especially in United Nations peace operations. Again, here at the United Nations, we have emphasized the fundamental role of women in conflict prevention and resolution by establishing a Mediterranean Women Mediators Network. We in the OSCE are dedicating great attention to the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

Regarding the human dimension, this year is a special one because it marks the seventieth

anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Defending and promoting human rights is an important precondition for long-lasting peace, security and sustainable development. If fundamental rights are protected through the legal system and in everyday life, the rule of law is affirmed and security is guaranteed. If there is no such protection, conflicts multiply and social and political instability easily arise.

In that regard, one of the priorities of our mandate in the Council was the fight against human trafficking. During our presidency in November, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2388 (2017) in order to defend the rights and the dignity of refugees and migrants. Similarly, as Chairperson of the OSCE, we are raising the attention of the Organization to this heinous and intolerable crime, with a specific focus on women, children and minors.

At the same time, we remain committed to defining frameworks for safe and regular migration, based on shared responsibility and international solidarity. It is crucial to engage countries of origin, transit and destination at the same table. That is also why we favour the approach, led by the United Nations, in the negotiations for the global compact for migration and refugees.

The fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination is another main priority for Italy. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the first major event of our OSCE chairpersonship was the Rome International Conference on Anti-Semitism, bringing together Jewish, Muslim and Christian political and religious leaders on that critical issue. Throughout this year, we want to devote greater attention to countering all forms of intolerance and discrimination. We cannot shy away from combating intolerance, because history has already taught us too many tragic lessons in that regard.

We will only achieve security when we recognize that we are all part of the same human race and that defending human dignity is the key to our liberty. In fact, that is a rooted value both in the United Nations and in the OSCE and it is what best defines the long-standing partnership between our two organizations in order to prevent conflicts and to promote stability and cooperation.

The President: I thank Mr. Alfano for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Söder (Sweden): Let me begin by welcoming the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Minister Alfano, to the Security Council. The OSCE, as the largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, has an indispensable role to play in upholding the rules-based order in the European region to promote cooperation and security. I thank the Minister for his comprehensive briefing and I would like to assure him of our full support.

The Secretary-General has clearly outlined the importance of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, and his ambition to further enhance cooperation and coordination with those organizations. In that regard, there is clear potential for greater United Nations-OSCE collaboration, particularly in the search for solutions to conflicts in Europe, which the Secretary-General has identified as a key priority. The OSCE's three dimensions of security are an operationalization of the broad concept of security, which the United Nations has also made its own, with sustaining peace at its heart. Through closer collaboration on issues of mutual concern, the United Nations and the OSCE can increase the strength and effectiveness of the work of both organizations.

The OSCE represents one of the most advanced levels of security cooperation in any region in the world. Its strength lies in a set of fundamental principles, to which we, as members, have all committed. However, today there are challenges to what we have agreed. For that reason, it is essential that the OSCE focus on its core business. A frank and open dialogue among participating States, aimed at restoring respect for our commonly agreed principles and commitments — as enshrined, most notably, in the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter — is needed. It is essential that the comprehensive concept of security and the OSCE's role be upheld. In particular, it is vital that the OSCE's human dimension and autonomous institutions are safeguarded.

Trust lies at the heart of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, its illegal annexation of Crimea and military actions in eastern Ukraine seriously challenge the rules-based European security order and erode that

trust. Rebuilding trust and confidence can happen through a renewed respect for the common principles and commitments to which we have all agreed. We therefore welcome the Italian chairpersonship's emphasis on substantive dialogue on issues that are at the core of the OSCE mandate.

Sweden will always be clear, consistent and principled when it comes to violations of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as on the European rules-based security order. We strongly support the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which must be given full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine. A possible United Nations peace mission in eastern Ukraine must have as its objective the restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and its internationally recognized borders. The Minsk process needs to be pursued and there must be delivery on its commitments.

The protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno Karabakh are of great concern to the common OSCE acquis. Through the OSCE and the European Union, we continue to support peacebuilding measures and conflict resolution in Georgia, including through co-chairpersonship of the Geneva international discussions and the European Union Monitoring Mission on the ground. In those contexts, it is of particular importance that the United Nations and the OSCE reinforce their cooperation and dialogue and coordinate activities to jointly pursue conflict prevention and peacebuilding. We see a good example of informal cooperation on the ground in Ukraine, where the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and the United Nations human rights monitoring mission are both operating.

Women's participation in all aspects of peacebuilding and sustaining peace must be ensured. We welcome the Italian chairpersonship's intention to mainstream a gender perspective into all of its activities. Gender aspects, including the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), must be an integral part of all our security-related work, both in Vienna and in the field missions.

In conclusion, the Council, by working together with the OSCE, can more effectively promote human rights, the rule of law and democracy, and ensure peace and security in Europe. That collaboration could be a model for United Nations cooperation with other regions that are in need of regional collaborative and security arrangements. In doing so, the Council can make full use of Chapter VIII of the Charter and encourage the settlement of disputes through regional arrangements.

Ms. Macdonal Álvarez (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address you, Mr. President, and all members of the Security Council on behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. We thank His Excellency Mr. Angelino Alfano, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic, for his briefing on the situation in Europe in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Bolivia welcomes the programme of the Italian chairpersonship of the OSCE for 2018 and its intention to promote an inclusive rapprochement that respects cultural differences, as well as its desire to pay particular attention to the fight against all forms of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination, including those based on religious beliefs, and to strengthen the spirit of Helsinki and multilateralism.

To that end, we believe that it is important that any conflict within States be resolved first and foremost internally, with respect for the principle of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and with strict adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We understand that in order to do so, preventive diplomacy, dialogue, consultations, good offices, mediation and negotiations through subregional and regional organizations can also be considered. We believe that it is equally important to respect the principle of no threat or use of force in the resolution of conflicts. In that regard, we support Italy's proposal to encourage the exchange of best practices and ongoing dialogue among all parties in order to stabilize all conflict in European States.

We highlight the ongoing role of the OSCE in bolstering relations among its member States through dialogue, especially when, despite divergences, it has been able to promote important consensus in various situation that have needed it. We commend its work in the promotion of comprehensive security by addressing transnational threats while focusing on terrorism in order to prevent it and counter radicalization and violent extremism. We agree that in order to succeed, we must adopt a comprehensive approach that includes protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and addressing the root causes of conflicts. We must also

prioritize education and promote the role of women and children.

In that regard, we welcome the fact that Italy has focused on mediation with regard to its economic potential and that it combats intolerance and discrimination and promotes pluralism and inclusion in their stead. We encourage the spirit of Palermo in facing these challenges, and we hope that its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, will be successfully implemented.

We hope that the channels of communication between the United Nations and the OSCE through its Liaison Office in Vienna will maintain and enhance their collaboration for the sake of international peace and security, and that they can achieve the goals they have set for themselves in the context of the priorities of that regional organization in a balanced and inclusive manner — in the interest of international peace and security.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome Mr. Angelino Alfano, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, and congratulate his country on assuming the chairpersonship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) this year. Italy can count on our full support in addressing the priorities of its chairpersonship, which include conflicts in Europe, particularly Ukraine, challenges in the Mediterranean, transnational threats and, above all, respect for human rights — the keystone of peace and international security.

I would like to focus on two points: the central role of the OSCE in our efforts to put an end to the Ukrainian crisis and the other priority challenges on which we, member States of the Security Council and the United Nations, must support the OSCE.

The Ukrainian crisis is one of the gravest and most dangerous violations not only of the founding principles of the OSCE, established in Helsinki more than 40 years ago, but also of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The OSCE has been able to respond appropriately to avoid the escalation of the conflict. It has acted responsibly by rapidly deploying a Special Monitoring Mission and by assuming thereafter a central role in supporting the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which remain the only possible path to a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

France is determined, in collaboration with Germany, to pursue its mediation efforts using the Normandy format. Each result obtained in this format and implemented on the ground counts. We saw evidence of that in December with the exchange of prisoners between the Ukrainian State and the separatists. Only progress in this format will support the implementation of the Minsk agreements by the parties. We count on the Council to fully support their efforts to that end as soon as possible.

We remain more convinced than ever that the OSCE, through its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, has a vital role to play in ensuring the implementation of political decisions on the ground. In that connection, the Special Monitoring Mission must be able to fully exercise its mandate without hindrance. We once again call for its staff to be granted freedom of movement and condemn in the strongest terms any violation of that principle, whether in the form of intimidation, threats or denial of access to certain areas. The OSCE's participation in the holding of future local elections in Donbas will also be necessary, although the modalities have yet to be determined.

Finally, our general goal remains the restoration of Ukraine's control over all its territory within the internationally recognized borders. I recall, in that regard, that France strongly condemns and does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol.

My second point relates generally to the role of the OSCE in the promotion of peace and security in Europe. Given the diversity of the threats we face, we encourage the OSCE's 57 members to abandon their political postures and to embrace instead the spirit of Helsinki, which made it possible, over 40 years ago, to reach a common vision of security in Europe.In that context, we believe that the work of the OSCE now needs to focus on the following issues.

The first is the resolution of regional conflicts. Moving past the Ukrainian case, we cannot be satisfied with the persistence of stagnant conflicts on the European continent, be it in Nagorno Karabakh, Transnistria or the separatist territories of Georgia. We are convinced that the role of the OSCE is central in all such cases, both in connection with and within

the framework of the established mediation formats, in order to promote dialogue and restore confidence which, as Minister Alfano and Deputy Minister Söder have stressed, are the key to resolving the conflicts.

Secondly, we must preserve the instruments of trust and military transparency on the European continent. The arms control treaties and confidence-building measures developed in the OSCE's political-military dimension are unique and constitute pillars of the European security architecture. It is essential to preserve their implementation and relevance, including by adapting them to modern realities. We are in favour of continuing discussions within the framework of the OSCE Structured Dialogue.

Thirdly, the preservation of the human dimension must remain central to the work of the OSCE, in line with the wishes of the Italian chairpersonship. This human dimension is central to the functioning and the identity of the OSCE. It is also key to finding long-term solutions to crises. To reject or marginalize that dimension can only undermine the prospects for peace and security in Europe. Like the Italian chairpersonship, we seek to promote the universality and indivisibility of all fundamental rights.

Finally, the OSCE must develop its operational role in response to certain emerging regional challenges. That applies, in particular, to combating human trafficking, preventing radicalization and addressing the impact of climate change on security. Doing so is important for each of these key challenges to security in Europe. The OSCE must develop concrete responses that are not merely public statements of position.

I will conclude by recalling the strong convergences that exist between the actions of the OSCE and those of the United Nations. Those two organizations share a common approach that combines security, development and human rights. It is our duty, in the Council, to continue to support the efforts of the OSCE in all crises in which it is called upon to act.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by welcoming Mr. Angelino Alfano, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy. I also seize this opportunity to congratulate him on Italy's chairpersonship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2018. I wish him every success in his presidency. I would also like to thank him for his valuable and comprehensive briefing today.

The recurrent annual briefing of the OSCE is commendable. It reaffirms the commitment of the organization to promoting cooperation with the United Nations in order to maintain international peace and security. In that context, the State of Kuwait, as a non-permanent Security Council member, looks forward to strengthening cooperation between the Council and the League of Arab States. Such cooperation should be framed within an institutional context, similar to the cooperation that the Council enjoys with the African Union and the European Union. We also call for an annual briefing from the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, similar to that we have received today.

Experience has proven that, in the light of the heightened armed conflicts and the difficulties and obstacles it faces in certain situations, the United Nations needs the support of regional organizations, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter. It is clear that regional and subregional organizations are the most qualified and cost-effective entities in helping to understand the realities of some conflicts. They are also the best equipped to analyse information related to the maintenance of peace and security in their regions.

The Arab States, particularly those on the Mediterranean, share the same concerns and challenges of the OSCE, including illegal migration, trafficking in persons, terrorism, transnational organized crime, counter-terrorism, extremism, racism and hatred of religions. Here, I emphasize that violent extremism and terrorism are threats to all values and cultures and not limited to any religion, race, culture and identity, as they also disregard human rights. We must all therefore strengthen our cooperation and redouble our efforts in order to overcome those challenges. In that context, I reaffirm that the State of Kuwait is keen to foster international cooperation in combating violent extremism and terrorism by adhering to all relevant Security Council resolutions, in addition to cooperating with United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, including the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

As the geographically largest regional security organization, the OSCE adds significant value to our common pursuit of international peace and security. Its activities cover Europe, Asia and Euro-Asia and are complementary to those of the United Nations. The OSCE has greatly contributed to United Nations efforts, particularly during the three pre-conflict phases of

early warning, preventative diplomacy and mitigation efforts, while also working towards peaceful settlement and contributing in the efforts to rebuilding peace.

We cherish the hope that OSCE efforts will tangibly contribute to overcoming long-standing crises that need radical solutions, such as those in Nagorno Karabakh, Georgia and the Balkans, in addition to addressing the conflict in Ukraine, which is entering its fourth year. We hope that all relevant parties will fully implement resolution 2202 (2015) and the 2015 Minsk agreements so as to achieve a comprehensive and balanced solution to this issue through dialogue, in particular within the Normandy format. We commend the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission for its efforts in that regard, including the facilitation of dialogue among all parties to the conflict.

In conclusion, we wish Minister Alfano every success during his term as Chairmperson-in-Office of the OSCE in achieving Italy's foreign policy aims and priorities, which he outlined in his briefing, as they are in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of security, stability and peace in the world.

Mr. Akhinzhanov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Minister Alfano, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for his briefing.

Kazakhstan welcomes the priorities of the OSCE Italian chairpersonship, under the motto, "Dialogue, Ownership, Responsibility". We commend its intention to focus efforts on strengthening the organization's effectiveness in responding to the conflict cycle and arms control by deepening the OSCE Structured Dialogue, which was previously initiated by the German and Austrian chairpersonships.

We encourage the OSCE to further develop its preventive toolbox in order to tackle existing conflicts and growing challenges, such as terrorism, radicalization, trafficking in human beings and the uncontrolled influx of migrants. In doing so, we are ready to stand side by side all participating States.

We support the OSCE key priority to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict in and around Ukraine, on the basis of the Minsk agreements. We also reiterate our strong support for the activities of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, to the work of which Kazakhstan representatives contribute.

In the same vein, we welcome the three-day visit of the Adviser to the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for the Transnistrian settlement process, Alfredo Conte, to Moldova on 20 February. His meetings on the ground are important steps in the ongoing confidence-building process. We also welcome the meeting of the co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group with the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in February.

The position of Kazakhstan regarding conflict remains crystal clear and unchanged. My country adheres to a balanced and realistic approach to conflict resolution that is based on the fundamental principles of international law. As a member of the Security Council, we stand for the implementation of its relevant resolutions, while as an OSCE participating State we also reaffirm the importance of the regional platform provided by the OSCE. The outcome of the recent Munich Security Conference clearly shows the necessity for a more cooperative approach, focusing on the Structured Dialogue and a positive, unifying agenda.

In addressing transnational threats, we also encourage the promotion of cooperation among the OSCE and other regional organizations, such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which play an important role in strengthening regional and subregional cooperation and security in Eurasia. We welcome the plan of the Italian chairpersonship to actively involve its Mediterranean and Asian partners by fostering joint work.

I would like to thank the Italian chairpersonship for entrusting Kazakhstan with chairing the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee. We believe that the secondary priorities of the Italian chairpersonship that aim to enhance dialogue on the issues of promoting economic progress and security through innovations, including in the spheres of the environment, human capital and good governance, open new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation. I would like to highlight the fact that Italy's priorities correspond closely to those outlined by my President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in his recent addresses to the nation in January and March. They focus on the issues of economic and social security of people and the development of human capital, among others.

We very much welcome the initiative of OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger to create a new generation of OSCE field missions, and we offer the grounds of Expo 2017 in Astana to serve as a platform for the establishment of an OSCE centre for green economy and connectivity. We count on the support of the Italian chairpersonship and participating States.

The OSCE remains one of the key United Nations partner organizations. As security challenges continue to evolve, we need to deepen United Nations-OSCE cooperation. As in the 2010 Kazakhstan chairpersonship of the OSCE, and later on, we support a comprehensive approach to security issues through inclusive dialogue, joint ownership and common responsibility, where no one and no concern is left behind.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea would like to welcome to the Security Council the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Mr. Angelino Alfano. We also thank him for his comprehensive and substantive briefing on the programme and activities planned under the OSCE Italian chairpersonship this year.

The global context in which we must maintain peace and security and find lasting solutions to ongoing conflicts is both increasingly complex and diverse. The levels of complexity go beyond conflict between two States. Terrorist groups and armed groups, organized crime, commercial interests and other elements of globalization, such as the movement of people, hinder the ability of States, regional groups and the United Nations to find sustainable solutions and guarantee peace and security for all the men and women of the world. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea therefore commends the programme of the OSCE Italian chairpersonship and the motto it has chosen, "Dialogue, Ownership, Responsibility".

The need to strengthen multilateralism is critical to the Security Council and its allies, such as the OSCE, in fulfilling their commitments. We all have something to contribute and we all have a role to play. With 57 participating States and in its capacity as one of the largest regional security organizations, the OSCE was created to complement and assist, within the framework of its mandate, the mechanisms of the United Nations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore believe that it is very important for the two organizations — the OSCE and the United Nations — to maintain close cooperation in order to strengthen the role of the OSCE in implementing United Nations decisions concerning European conflicts and for the benefit of international peace and security. We also encourage greater collaboration among the OSCE and African regional and subregional organizations, within the framework of expanding Euro-Mediterranean and Euro-Atlantic multilateral relations.

In that context, I take this opportunity to endorse the priority issues on the agenda of the OSCE Italian chairpersonship, which focus on achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine. We also stand by its priority to address protracted conflicts through existing formats. Protracted conflicts often generate social and economic instability, nurturing terrorist groups and their supporters, organized crime and a lack of social cohesion, which in turn nourishes radicalization, violent extremism, racism, xenophobia and intolerance. It is encouraging that the efforts of the OSCE are geared towards finding peaceful and sustainable solutions to the conflicts in its territory.

Moreover, the major efforts of the OSCE, its independent institutions and its missions on the ground have so far prevented the situations in the so-called protracted conflicts in Georgia, Nagorno Karabakh and Transnistria from intensifying. For that reason, we would be pleased if the OSCE Italian chairpersonship were to work with the same focus that has been maintained to date, in collaboration with the United Nations wherever possible, towards the long-awaited solutions to all of those equally important issues, which paralyse the continuity and daily life of the affected communities in the same way. We believe that a new approach and greater resolve are necessary to put an end to those crises, while respecting the principles of sovereignty and independence of States, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

One of the strategic objectives of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea's membership of the Security Council, as a representative of the African continent, is to ensure the fair and humane treatment of immigrants and refugees. We would therefore highlight and endorse the Italian chairpersonship's objective of addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from the Mediterranean, such as migration. In so doing, we

welcome the chairpersonship's intention to address the migratory situation, not only in terms of security, but also with respect to economic potential and the fight against intolerance and discrimination. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea applauds Italy's determination to promote pluralism, inclusion and intercultural and interreligious dialogue as the bedrocks of international peace and security.

Today, on International Women's Day, we also highlight the focus of the OSCE chairpersonship on ensuring a gender perspective in its work and in implementing its gender action plan. If we may, we would also like to encourage the chairpersonship, in line with resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and subsequent resolutions on this important issue, to incorporate into its gender actions plan the relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General's report of 14 August 2017 (A/72/323), on the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, focusing on women and girls of African descent, and other similar reports that promote the inclusion and better treatment of women and girls of other European minority groups in peace and security processes.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the excellent mediation efforts of the OSCE to achieve peaceful solutions to conflicts, in line with the implementation and full respect of agreements. We again emphasize the importance of closer cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, which is the only mechanism for peaceful solutions and greater stability in the OSCE regions. Allow me to wish every success to Italy's Chairperson-in-Office in fulfilling his priorities.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the convening of this meeting and the presence of Minister Angelino Alfano, to whom we wish every success during the Italian chairpersonship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). He delivered a valuable briefing on the priorities that he will spearhead this year at the helm of the OSCE, many of which are convergent with those of the United Nations and, consequently, the Security Council.

In line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, Peru believes it necessary to develop and strengthen synergies with regional organizations in order to more effectively prevent and respond to conflict situations. We take this opportunity to highlight three areas in which we believe that the OSCE plays a fundamental role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The first area is the effectiveness of the OSCE's comprehensive security vision and corresponding regulations, which recognize the fulfilment of security and human rights as two sides of the same coin, with a view to acting collectively to prevent and address modern vulnerabilities, challenges and threats. Despite the emergence of revisionist discourse, we believe that the current vision is clearly valid and relevant. If we are to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity must be understood as a value, never as a threat. In that regard, we applaud the fact that the spirit of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime has spread across the Mediterranean to protect migrants, including women and children, the victims of various conflicts and humanitarian crises and those who fall victim to criminal organizations that traffic in persons. Comprehensive security is focused on individuals.

The second area is the OSCE's remit and leadership in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime. We wholeheartedly agree with the OSCE on the importance of identifying the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime to effectively combat those scourges. We must understand and address their perverse dynamics, which work to benefit them both and to harm our collective security and our societies and institutions. Peru believes that regional organizations should promote implementation of the various elements of our international regulatory framework, such as Security Council resolutions, while taking into account the particular challenges of each region.

The third area concerns the credibility and value of the mechanisms of political support and peaceful settlement of disputes that the OSCE offers to its members in Europe and Central Asia. We believe that the legacy of its work constitutes a reference for all regional mechanisms aimed at promoting peace and security.

Finally, we emphasize the consistency of the principles of dialogue, ownership and responsibility that are reflected in the OSCE's theme for this year, with a sustainable peace-centred approach that the United Nations has championed.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would first like to thank Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano for his comprehensive briefing. We could not agree more with the idea of relaunching the spirit of Helsinki, and he can count on our support this year. We fully support the priorities of this year's Italian chairship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), particularly finding a solution to the crises in and around Ukraine, addressing protracted conflicts, strengthening the dialogues on girls and on good governance, combating discrimination and intolerance and promoting freedom of religion or belief and interreligious dialogue.

In recent years the overall political and military situation in Europe has deteriorated significantly, owing to ongoing violations of the principles and commitments to which we all subscribe. We believe that better use could be made of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue, mediation and conflict prevention. Obviously, and unfortunately, the Russian aggression against Ukraine remains a key issue for the Organization. We appreciate the fact that Mr. Alfano's first visit in his capacity as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office was to Ukraine and Russia. A lack of genuine dialogue and trust is what has led us to this moment, and it continues to misdirect us. The illegal annexation and occupation of Crimea and the continued aggression in Donbas will have devastating consequences for the Euro-Atlantic security system. We cannot allow the use of force to become an accepted instrument in relations between sovereign States.

In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, we should not ignore the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, which still represents the eyes and ears of the international community on the ground. Poland is one of the biggest contributors to the Mission, with 40 monitors and analysts, and we will continue to support it. Not only should we work to reform and further enhance the Mission, we should ensure that it can fully execute its mandate. All attacks on the Mission and its monitors by Russian-backed militants must cease immediately. Russia's return to the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination will be crucial if stabilization efforts in Donbas are to succeed.

We would like to reiterate Poland's strong support for the work of the OSCE autonomous institutions, particularly the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which is located in Warsaw. Its role in identifying challenges, especially within the contexts of security and of assistance to OSCE participating States in the implementation of their commitments in the area of human rights and democracy, cannot be overestimated. Poland is proud that by hosting the Office and its flagship event, the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw has become a European centre for dialogue on democracy and human rights.

We need to make better use of the existing instruments aimed at rebuilding trust and confidence, notably the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. We are concerned about the fact that Russia continues either to violate their provisions or act contrary to their spirit. Any further erosion of them would be highly regrettable and could have tragic consequences. In that context, we would like to emphasize that modernizing the Vienna Document remains a crucial element of the discussion on risk reduction and confidence-building.

The OSCE's mediating role in the protracted conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh, Transnistria and Georgia are also worthy of mention. The diplomatic efforts that the Organization coordinates can influence decision-makers in creating the atmosphere of trust and stability that the local communities in those regions have awaited for so long.

As the looming threat of terrorist activities fuels the ongoing migration crisis, we must stand united in order to combat racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination, and pay special attention to education in our efforts to halt the spread of radicalization and poorly understood nationalism. Education is the best prevention.

On International Women's Day, a liberating day, I want to pay tribute to all the ordinary women who have played extraordinary roles in the history of their countries and communities. We hope that the OSCE will strive to keep up the momentum in its current efforts to further implement programmes aimed at increasing women's participation in the political and public arenas, building the capacities of women's networks, combating violence against women and implementing resolution 1325 (2000), which emphasizes women's involvement in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire would like to thank Mr. Angelino Alfano, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International

Cooperation of Italy and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), on behalf of his country, Italy, for his briefing on the programme of his chairship during his mandate. We welcome the convening of this meeting, which is part of the overall framework of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the area of international peace and security, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The work of the OSCE in Europe and that of the Economic Community of West African States, for example, in West Africa, shows clearly that regional organizations can be effective tools for supporting the United Nations in conflict prevention and resolution. We need hardly recall the OSCE's peacekeeping and international security efforts, which are a major part of preventive diplomacy in its area of remit. In that regard, my delegation commends the ongoing support that the organization provides to the mechanisms established to resolve the conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to advance the peace talks concerning Transnistria and Georgia. We also appreciate its role in helping to stabilize Kosovo and monitor the implementation of the Minsk agreements on eastern Ukraine.

Côte d'Ivoire calls for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, which, with its 57 member States, continues to be one of the most significant collective-security entities in the world. We welcome the priorities outlined by the Chairperson-in-Office, which are geared towards dialogue, ownership and responsibility and based on a proactive approach to security, encompassing its political, military, economic, environmental and human aspects. We also welcome the focus on migration issues and the fight against corruption and new transnational threats, such as terrorism, cybercrime and trafficking in persons.

In conclusion, the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire wishes Italy every success in implementing its priorities in chairing the OSCE with the aim of achieving the organization's goals and objectives.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): I thank Foreign Minister Alfano for his briefing on the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and for his leadership of the organization. The United States greatly appreciates the OSCE's efforts in promoting security, stability and good governance in the region and throughout the world. We offer our full support to the organization and to Italy in its chairship.

The OSCE has been critical to developing a robust European and Eurasian security architecture. The United States greatly appreciates the contributions it has made over more than 40 years in helping to underpin stability, security and prosperity throughout the region. As an OSCE participating State, the United States supports its partners and reaffirms its own commitment to that crucial effort. In order to strengthen the OSCE's utility and preserve its function as a primary forum for an open dialogue on core European security concerns, we strongly support the continuation of its structured dialogue on current and future challenges and risks. That initiative has opened up productive and frank deliberations among participating States, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation in addressing the leading challenges of our day.

One of the greatest security and humanitarian challenges the OSCE is facing today is the continuing crisis in eastern Ukraine, where Russian acts of aggression have claimed more than 10,000 lives. Russia and the forces it arms, trains, leads and fights alongside have perpetuated the conflict for too long. The United States commends the OSCE's efforts to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We recognize in particular the essential role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which remains the international community's best source of impartial information on the significant toll that the conflict in eastern Ukraine has taken on the country's people, land and infrastructure. The fact that Russia, a member of the OSCE, continues to drive the conflict is a terrible irony. The OSCE's role in facilitating humanitarian work has been critical to alleviating the suffering caused by four years of aggression. We applaud the courage and dedication of the Monitoring Mission's unarmed monitors and strongly support efforts to ensure their safety in carrying out their critical mission.

The United States continues to support the Minsk agreements and their full implementation as the best path to restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity and alleviating the suffering in the Donbas region. While both sides must implement their Minsk commitments, Russia can single-handedly bring peace and end the conflict by withdrawing its forces. We also call for an end to Russia's occupation of Crimea, which has contributed to needless violence, displacement and death for too long. Beyond Ukraine, the United States

welcomes and supports the OSCE's continuing efforts to resolve the conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh, Georgia and Transnistria. It must remain focused on those protracted conflicts in order to underscore the fact that frozen and status-quo conflicts are completely antithetical to the peace, stability and security priorities of the OSCE and the international community.

The OSCE's crucial role in strengthening security and stability, addressing the humanitarian needs of conflict-afflicted populations and promoting good governance in its region cannot be overstated. The United States fully supports the OSCE's comprehensive approach to addressing critical security challenges. We also unequivocally affirm its importance as a partner to the United Nations and in particular to the Security Council in protecting and promoting peace and prosperity.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to start by congratulating Mr. Angelino Alfano, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, on his assumption of the post of Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I would also like to thank him for his comprehensive briefing and for outlining the priorities of his chairship in addressing current threats and challenges to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic, Euro-Mediterranean and Eurasian regions.

We welcome the significant contribution that the OSCE, as one of the world's largest regional security organizations, continues to make in support of the maintenance of international peace and security. Its comprehensive approach to security, which includes its political, military, economic, environmental and human dimensions, is in line with the new global paradigm aimed at ensuring sustainable peace and development. In that connection, we take note of the OSCE's efforts in conflict prevention and resolution as well as post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. We particularly appreciate the important role that it is playing in the efforts to resolve the protracted conflicts, and newer ones, in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, in cooperation with the United Nations and the European Union.

Dialogue and negotiation remain the only way to find durable political and diplomatic solutions to some of the difficult and extremely delicate peace and security challenges affecting member States of the OSCE. Where reaching a peaceful settlement is concerned, we cannot overemphasize the importance of political will and commitment on the part of the parties to some of these conflicts. Enhancing the necessary trust and dialogue between and among the parties is also very critical to making tangible progress. We are pleased to note that the Italian chairship has made that one of its important priorities.

As in other regions of the world, the growing threats of terrorism and violent extremism pose a significant security challenge to OSCE member States, and the role that the OSCE has been playing in preventing and combating terrorism, by promoting a coordinated approach among member States, is very important. In that context, it is only appropriate that the Italian chairship is placing a greater emphasis on sustaining durable peace in the OSCE area by promoting a holistic approach to countering terrorism. There can be no doubt that transnational security threats, including the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, money-laundering, drug trafficking and, most importantly, human trafficking, are among the most serious threats to the security and stability of Europe. It is therefore fitting that Italy has chosen the Mediterranean region, where most of those transnational organized crimes originate, as one of its geographic areas of focus during its chairship.

Promoting cooperation with other relevant regional and international organizations will be vital for the OSCE, not only in countering terrorism but also in other dimensions of its work. Ethiopia attaches great importance to the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we appreciate the partnership between the OSCE and the United Nations, which has been maintained through high-level dialogues and information-sharing, as well as cooperation in the field.

Lastly, we wish the Italian chairship success in implementing its priorities in the work of achieving greater security and stability in the entire OSCE area.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank Foreign Minister Alfano for his briefing. The United Kingdom fully supports the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its efforts to achieve stability, peace and democracy for the people of Europe, including through dialogue. Like the United Nations, the OSCE is a pillar of the international rules-

based system, and respect for its fundamental principles must be restored.

Nowhere in Europe is that more important than in Ukraine. I would like reaffirm the United Kingdom's full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, including in Crimea. Those are words with which we open so many Security Council resolutions. They are fundamental to all States Members of the United Nations. Yet last month, we marked the fourth anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. That act, by a permanent member of the Council, showed complete disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and trampled on international law. In addition to annexing Crimea, Russia has destabilized eastern Ukraine and continues to fuel the conflict, at enormous human and material cost to the Ukrainian people.

As always, it is the civilians who suffer most. Since the conflict began, more than 10,300 people have lost their lives, almost 25,000 have been injured and 3.4 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, particularly along the line of contact. We have seen reports that more than 1,000 Russian military personnel and mercenaries have lost their lives, so the Russian people are also mourning their children. Only by means of a truly sustainable ceasefire and genuine political will, through the implementation of the Minsk agreements, can the conflict be brought to an end. We welcome the most recent recommitment to the ceasefire by the Trilateral Contact Group. However, past ceasefires have been broken and have not resulted in sustained improvements to the security situation.

While the conflict continues, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, ably directed by Chief Monitor Apakan, must be permitted to carry out its mandate in full and granted complete, safe and unhindered access to all Ukraine, including Crimea and the parts of the border with Russia that are not under Ukraine's control. The increasingly aggressive behaviour and threats that we seeing directed at the OSCE monitors are deeply worrying, and we have not forgotten the sacrifice of paramedic Joseph Stone on 23 April last year. If, as Russia claims, it truly cares about the people of the Donbas region, it should end the fighting that it started, withdraw its military personnel and weapons and cease its support for the separatists. Russia should also show a genuine political will to end the conflict and abide by the Minsk agreements that it signed. Until those steps are taken, we will work with our European Union partners to ensure that sanctions remain fully in place.

We must retain the Council's focus on Ukraine. Next Thursday, the United Kingdom will co-host an Arria Formula meeting to discuss this blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The chaos, violence and ongoing loss of life resulting from Russia's military operations clearly merit the Council's time. We must be ready to remain seized of the issue.

We welcome and support Italy's intention to prioritize tackling modern slavery and addressing the challenges associated with migration, including corruption and trafficking. In addition, we support Italy's focus on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and on protracted conflicts, which continue to undermine security in the OSCE region. Those are areas where the OSCE's cross-dimensional approach can add real value. We are keen to work with Italy to ensure that OSCE activities complement, rather than duplicate, the work of United Nations agencies and other organizations.

The OSCE's autonomous institutions and network of field operations can and do make a significant contribution to the promotion of security, stability, democracy and the rule of law across the region. However, it is able to do so only when Member States stand up for the principles that guide it. It is the task of all of us on the Security Council to stand up for those who suffer acts of aggression from larger neighbours, for the Charter of the United Nations and for international law.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Mr. Angelino Alfano, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, for his substantive briefing on the work of the OSCE and the issues on its agenda.

We have always proceeded from the assumption that the work of the OSCE is particularly important to the European continent, and we have always supported strengthening European institutions and agreements on treaty and legal regimes in our shared security area. Russia is firmly committed to the Helsinki principles for relations between States and to political obligations undertaken in that regard. Unfortunately, our calls for reasonable dialogue and practical implementation of the principles of equal and indivisible security in the West have so far gone unheeded. Some of our partners

continue to prefer to see things in terms of the Cold War, portraying Russia as a threat to peace and security and forming closed clubs in which some countries' security can come only at others' expense. The result of all that has been that today the Euro-Atlantic architecture, of which the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act remain the cornerstones, is being severely tested.

In these complex realities, it is more important than ever to strengthen multilateral cooperation, including through international organizations. That cooperation should be regular and multifaceted, and should cover every aspect of security. It is the OSCE's job to help to realize the purposes and principles of the United Nations in the context of its mandate and the area within its purview. We are ready to cooperate constructively with the Italian chairship of the OSCE and we share its desire to strengthen multilateralism for peace, security, stability and cooperation among the States of the region. We have great expectations for the increased cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations, especially considering what has already been achieved so far. We have especially noted the intensive collaboration between the OSCE secretariat's Transnational Threats Department and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in combating the illegal trade in drugs and small arms, terrorism, organized crime, corruption and money-laundering, as well as in countering human trafficking and illegal migration. An important area of cooperation between the two organizations is the implementation of the Security Council's anti-terrorism resolutions, as well as in fighting the ideology of terrorism, as is provided for in resolution 2354 (2017).

In the area of international security information, the OSCE complements the global United Nations efforts to develop confidence-building measures through the use of information and communications technologies. We urge it to join efforts to develop and implement additional concrete confidence-building measures in the interests of providing cybersecurity. Those platforms should not be used for unfounded accusations in that regard.

We value cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE on the ground, as has occurred through its Mission in Kosovo, as well as their collaboration in the Geneva talks on Transcaucasia aimed at establishing a direct dialogue between Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We support the Italian chairship's priority of continuing the OSCE's efforts to assist in settling regional conflicts, and we are willing to cooperate with settlements for Transnistria and Nagorno Karabakh.

We did not plan to talk specifically today about the situation in Ukraine outside the context of the OSCE's activity. Ultimately, it is far from the only issue it is dealing with. However, the statements by a number of representatives have compelled us to bring it up.

In order to understand the reason for the deteriorating situation in Ukraine, we have to go back practically to the very beginning and recall how the problems in Ukraine first started. Our assessments of the origin and current situation of what I emphasize is an internal Ukrainian crisis do not coincide, to put it mildly. Four years ago, with the direct involvement of the West, there was a coup d'état in Ukraine. Those who came to power decided to rid Ukraine of everything Russian and the Russian language that was native to millions of the country's citizens, and to tie them to a paradigm of development to which they never consented and could not accept. There was absolutely no desire for reconciliation with the new authorities in Crimea or eastern Ukraine. Crimeans freely chose unification with Russia. In Donbas they were attacked with bullets and shells.

For the whole of those four years, Kyiv has not only been at war with its own citizens, it has persistently cultivated hatred for Russia in society and has permitted an orgy of nationalism and xenophobia, with the full connivance of our Western partners. Without Kyiv's acknowledgement of the depravity of those policies, it is unlikely that anything will change for the better. The key to resolving the problems in Ukraine lies in the hands of the Ukrainians themselves, and only the Ukrainians. But Kyiv chose a convenient formula, dumping the blame for all of its problems and its unwillingness to engage in a dialogue with its own citizens on the infamous Russian aggression, which no one has been able to present evidence of. And of course the Western curators are hardly burning with a desire to put Kyiv on a constructive path.

Resolution 2202 (2015) enshrined the Minsk agreements as the basis for settling the situation in Ukraine. However, right from the beginning, Kyiv worked to sabotage the process and rewrite the agreements' intentions, while the recently passed law on the so-called reintegration of Donbas has officially buried the Minsk package of measures. We can cite

numerous other examples of the provocative actions of the Ukrainian authorities, such as their discriminatory language policy, the indulging of neo-Nazist movements, the countless violation of laws by its own citizens and the fomenting of hatred against Russia. They turn a blind eye to the scandalous vandalism of Russian cultural centres; seizing Russian businesses has virtually become official policy; and they have created an atmosphere of totalitarian suppression of all opposition voices. Opposition journalists are being murdered, and I could continue this list. But the West prefers not to notice. The Kyiv authorities have been indulged by their sponsors and given carte blanche to say and do whatever they feel like. As long as that continues and Kyiv continues to undermine the Minsk agreements, as long as it refuses to talk directly to its own citizens while falsely presenting Russia as a party to the conflict but not themselves — alas, we can expect nothing good and no genuine settlement.

For our part, we are directly interested in normalizing the situation in Ukraine as soon as possible, and we are doing everything we can to facilitate that. But I would like to remind everyone, including those who spoke today, that before Ukraine can regain control of its borders, it must first comply with the political elements of the agreements, which are a condition for regaining that control, and not the other way around. That is what the Minsk agreements say. I advise those who are so fond of referring to them to read them again.

We support the efforts of the OSCE in the Trilateral Contact Group and the work of the Special Monitoring Mission in Donbas, which is acting as the international observer for the implementation by the parties — Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk — of the Minsk agreements, which are the sole basis for a settlement of the crisis in Ukraine, as affirmed in resolution 2202 (2015). We hope that the Italian chairship will continue to ensure the objectivity of the work of the Special Monitoring Mission, as well as focusing the OSCE's representatives in the Contact Group on developing a direct dialogue among the parties to the conflict.

In conclusion, I would like to once again emphasize that Russia sees the OSCE as an important mechanism for building an equal and indivisible system of pan-European security and wants to strengthen its role and prestige. We believe firmly that in order to increase the OSCE's prestige, it is essential to define its priorities. The necessity for reform is long overdue. At issue are its adoption of a charter and rules for its executive structures' operations, as well as introducing order and transparency in many other areas. It is not an exaggeration to say that strengthening the OSCE and ensuring that it attains the current goal, as outlined in Astana in 2010, of establishing a free, democratic and indivisible security association from Vancouver to Vladivostok, is in the interests of all States Members of the United Nations. We urge it to concern itself not with imaginary threats but with real ones. We all know what they are. Instead, we should think together about a renewed long-term international security system that would be built on the principles of respect for the interests of other countries, international law and the key role of the United Nations.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the presence in the Security Council today of Mr. Angelino Alfano, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, and we thank him for his briefing.

All over the world, a wide spectrum of challenges with increasingly complex risks are quickly emerging. No country can respond to them alone, and no country can remain immune. Global issues require global solutions. Collective security requires collective maintenance. While the United Nations is at the core of the international collective-security architecture, regional and subregional organizations also enjoy unique advantages in resolving regional hot-spot issues. China supports enhancing the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, with the aim of jointly maintaining international peace and security. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations should firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations while working diligently to address hot-spot issues through dialogue and consultation and engaging actively in preventive diplomacy with the aim of defusing and resolving disputes peacefully.

The OSCE is an important partner of the United Nations. In recent years it has been actively engaged in preventive diplomacy, promoting security and mutual trust among countries in the region and mediating regional disputes, efforts that China appreciates and applauds. We welcome Italy's decision to designate dialogue, ownership and responsibility as its working

motto during its chairship-in-office, and to respond actively to terrorism, illicit smuggling, transnational crimes and refugee crises, among other challenges. China supports practical and effective cooperation between the Security Council and the OSCE in the areas of peace and security, and we are eager to see the OSCE continue to play an active and constructive role in upholding regional peace, security and stability.

We welcome all the positive efforts being made by all the parties concerned, including the OSCE, to find a peaceful solution to the Ukrainian issue. We hope that all the parties concerned will work to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Minsk agreements, with the aim of reaching a comprehensive, lasting and balanced solution to the question of Ukraine through dialogue and consultation. The international community should continue to support the diplomatic efforts of all the parties concerned to arrive at a political settlement of the Ukrainian issue so as to collectively restore peace, stability and development in Ukraine as soon as possible.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

I would first like to pay tribute to Foreign Minister Alfano for his briefing today in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE.). It is a privilege to see him back in the Council during the second year of our split term. The cooperation between the Governments of Italy and the Netherlands during our split term on the Council for 2017 and 2018 is a great example of European cooperation and political leadership.

Today I will focus on three points — the OSCE as a regional security organization, the OSCE as an organization for dialogue and the situation in Ukraine. As a crucial regional organization, the OSCE complements the work of the Security Council on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It plays a central role in early warning, conflict prevention and resolution in the region. It also plays a crucial role in the quest for peaceful settlements of the protracted conflicts on the territories of Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan, which must be resolved in accordance with international laws and OSCE commitments.

My second point concerns the OSCE as an organization for dialogue, whereby it offers its 57 participating States a unique platform for promoting peaceful solutions to conflicts in Europe, based on commonly agreed principles. Through its comprehensive security approach, the organization is able to deal with all the dimensions of security, including its political, military, economic, environmental, and human aspects. Its field offices and independent institutions — the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights — play an important role in that regard that I would like to highlight. In this way, the OSCE provides space for dialogue within all three dimensions, and does so in an inclusive manner.

That brings me to my third point, the situation in eastern Ukraine. The ongoing foreign interference in Ukraine constitutes a serious violation of the founding principles of the OSCE. I reiterate my country's full commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We call on all the parties involved to fully implement the Minsk agreements. That should begin with the withdrawal of heavy weapons and a sustainable ceasefire. The OSCE's role in the Trilateral Contact Group and the Special Monitoring Mission are crucial to the implementation of the Minsk agreements. It is absolutely essential that the Special Monitoring Mission be allowed to do its important work without impediments. The monitors must have full, safe and unhindered access to all parts of the conflict zone. Any obstructions of the Mission's work or threats to its staff are unacceptable and must stop immediately.

In the context of Ukraine, the Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to recall resolution 2166 (2014), which demanded that those responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 be held to account and that all States cooperate fully with the efforts to establish accountability. We mourn the victims of the downing of MH17 and would like to express our sympathy with their families and loved ones.

In conclusion, today is 8 March, International Women's Day. In that context, I particularly welcome Mr. Alfano's words highlighting the importance of gender equality, in line with the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. We greatly appreciate Italy's active role in initiating a network of Mediterranean women mediators, through which we believe it will move the OSCE forward in that area. As OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, we believe that Italy will build bridges as successfully as it did during its time on

the Council. We pay tribute to its leadership both at the OSCE and the United Nations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.